

## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Field Hospital: The Church's Engagement with a Wounded World.* William T. Cavanaugh. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. ISBN: 9780802872975. Pp. viii + 268. \$24.00 (USD).

William Cavanaugh (DePaul University) appropriates Pope Francis' vision of "the church as a field hospital after battle" (2) as a metaphor by which to weave together his own recent writings on economics, political theology, and violence. Cavanaugh envisions the church tending the wounds of the world within specific locales or spaces in the world without laying claim to, or seeking to carve out, a space for itself. In identifying itself in solidarity with the world, the church gives expression to the Kingdom of God in a tangible manner.

The thirteen chapters in *Field Hospital* are divided into three parts: the first part brings together four essays on economics, the second part another four on political theology, and the third part, five essays on the theme of violence. A relatively short introduction lays out Cavanaugh's rationale for this collection of his writings, his intention that they be read together as "a coherent argument for a merciful church" (10).

Narrating Westphalia, Iowa—a supposedly idyllic Catholic enclave in the mid-twentieth-century, pre-Vatican II era—provides Cavanaugh the occasion for

proposing that the church-world relationship is more complex than just the choice between acceptance or rejection of the world, posited upon the church-sect distinction developed by Weber and Troeltsch, whose work he labels as “Protestant sociology” (39). His reading of Westphalia serves to highlight three concerns that are central to Cavanaugh’s work: first, overcoming the idolatries of the market and the state, fostered, at least in part, by the modern conception of the separation of religion from the rest of life; second, a recovery of the Catholic tradition to resource the church’s engagement with the postmodern world; and third, an emphasis on local practices of faithful Catholic communities as a way to make the Kingdom of God real and tangible in the places where the world is wounded and needs healing. Cavanaugh’s comment (52) is tellingly ironic: the post-Vatican II era is, in a sense, “characterized not by engagement but by a profound disengagement with the world.” A more complex and nuanced understanding of the ways in which “the followers of Christ” can relate to the world should encourage the church “to create new spaces of engagement with earthly life that do not simply bow to the inevitability of ‘the world’” (53).

In the second (and in my opinion the most substantive) part of this volume, Cavanaugh begins by making a case for bringing back theology into political theology. His argument is built upon the fundamental insight that the religious/secular divide is a modern construct that itself is theological in motivation: it seeks to replace the ecclesiastical with the nation-state, and situates ultimate authority and power in the supposedly “secular” nation-state. Cavanaugh understands this as an attempt to substitute a false god—the nation-state—for the true God. In this idolatrous context, an incarnational and sacramental understanding of life opens up the possibility of a contingent, embodied response to the wounded.

In the second chapter in this part, Cavanaugh reads Pope Benedict XVI’s social encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* as lying within a radical Catholic tradition “that emphasized the importance of decentralized forms of social life” (134). He lauds the encyclical’s vision for a multiplicity of social, economic, and political spaces that would counteract the damaging hegemony of the free market and the all-powerful nation-state. The following chapter explores “some convergences between Augustine’s *City of God* and the work of secular political theorist Sheldon Wolin, one of the principal proponents of what is called ‘radical democracy’” (141). This then leads Cavanaugh to envision a politics of multiplicity where contingently enacted performances of the city of God open up “spaces of resistance” (155).

In the third part, Cavanaugh’s writings are about religious violence. Having previously written about what he calls the modern myth of religious violence, he argues that “secular” ideologies and institutions are just as likely to be violent as “religious” ones. The claim that religion is inherently violent depends upon a dis-

inction between “religious” and “secular.” These, however, are “invented categories,” invented in the West in modern times for political reasons. There is no essential difference between the two. The first essay in this part summarizes the argument of Cavanaugh’s book *The Myth of Religious Violence* and then responds to objections voiced in opposition to his arguments there. The second essay argues against the commonly accepted idea that theology and politics should be separated lest superstition, irrationality, and violence result. The secular functions as an alternative religion, replacing loyalty to the transcendent God with loyalty to the nation-state. Therefore, what is needed is good political theology rather than an idolatrous political theology.

*Field Hospital* is an important work that deserves to be read not only by specialists in political theology and Christian social ethics but by all who value a compassionate and careful engagement with the world, grounded in a distinctly Christian theological vision. Even though Cavanaugh writes as a Roman Catholic, his vision of the church and the world is ecumenical. Cavanaugh’s method of critiquing the underlying assumptions and generally accepted terms of a debate in order to move beyond deadlocked argumentation and to uncover fresh insights should prove particularly instructive for graduate students of theology. For other researchers, theologians, and religious practitioners, this book should be suggestive of several diverse lines of inquiry, thought, and action that would help build upon this book’s insightful and engaging analysis. It does include some fairly technical discussions in its field, which might limit its audience. Yet its concerns are the concerns of us all, for all of us face the onslaught of the market and the state that seem to demand that we surrender an increasing amount of space within our lives to them. In the face of the absolutist invasions of our persons, families, and communities—invasions that continue to wound people—the church can indeed function like a field hospital, lean, mobile, and purposeful as it binds up the wounds of the suffering.

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*Surprised by Scripture: Engaging Contemporary Issues.* N. T. Wright. New York: HarperOne, 2015. ISBN: 780062230546. Pp. xi + 223. \$15.99 (USD).

There is no shortage of books coming from the pen of N. T. Wright these days. *Surprised by Scripture* is a bit different, however, as readers will find transcripts of lectures delivered between 2004 and 2013. Because of this format, some of Wright’s keenest insights into the world of New Testament Christianity (among other things) are delivered with clear prose in a highly accessible volume.

Fans of the renowned British historian and biblical scholar will not be disappointed in (re)discovering Wright's opinions about the most controversial subjects—women in ministry, evolution and the “historical Adam,” politics, the problem of evil, and other issues. Few punches are held back as Wright lucidly outlines a “mere Christian” perspective on these topics, in a tone typical of his other popular works (e.g., *Surprised by Hope, Scripture and the Authority of God*, etc.). Disappointment may come, however, when faster readers find themselves poring over the same concepts—sometimes virtually the same paragraphs—multiple times. For this “certain amount of repetition,” Wright concedes, “I apologize” (ix). Despite this distracting feature, readers who take each chapter at a time may appreciate the review.

The first chapter tackles the “divide between science and religion.” Here, the difference between the European and the American situation is directly confronted (e.g., “the United Kingdom never had a Scopes trial,” 2). Wright also notes that the rise of modern science was not viewed as threatening by all religious parties. One of the key reasons for the eventual “divide” is because of the hidden assumptions of Epicurean philosophy—a point he makes numerous times in the volume. The basic fallacy in this ancient Greek perspective was that divine activity and the world of human events constitute a zero-sum game: either God does something, or people do. When people didn't have knowledge of how certain things happened, they attributed this to “God.” But when the sciences came to explain how “things worked” without reference to God, it is no surprise that the world became a much more godless, secular, and shallow place.

In contrast to this worldview, Christianity (and Judaism, for that matter) saw heaven and earth as overlapping realms, and God as omniscient and sovereign over the whole world—not just over a “religious” or “spiritual” sphere. Thus, in speaking of events, “The danger in using the word *miracle* . . . is that we assume the zero-sum either/or” (14; italics original). After revisiting hermeneutical issues in Genesis, the chapter concludes with the eschatological observation about creation as the first temple and the current world as God's “new temple project”: “the project, in other words, in which *heaven and earth are brought together at last*, with God's sovereign rule extending *on earth as in heaven* through the mission of Jesus” (24; italics original).

The second chapter asks, “Do We Need a Historical Adam?” Knowing that this is not quite an adequate question, Wright dives into Paul's view of Adam, the larger theology of what Adam and Eve represent, and potential perspectives from a common-descent perspective. His take?

[T]hat just as God chose Israel from the rest of humankind for a special, strange, demanding vocation, so perhaps what Genesis is

telling us is that *God chose one pair from the rest of early hominids for a special, strange, demanding vocation*. This pair (call them Adam and Eve if you like) were to be the representatives of the whole human race. . . . [I]f we can study Genesis and human origins without hearing *the call to be an image-bearing human being renewed in Jesus*, we are massively missing the point . . . (37, 39; italics original)

Chapter 3 revisits the reasonableness of the resurrection. The essay is the closest thing to a short summary of Wright's tome *The Resurrection of the Son of God* that one will probably find. The key points in his argument are (my organization): (1) History observes things that are always *unrepeatable* (this is important for those with "scientific" or "empirical" demands); (2) "resurrection" meant physical, bodily resurrection in the NT context (as opposed to "spiritual" or purely symbolic); (3) the resurrection of Jesus is integral to the Christian story, not an accessory; (4) resurrection of individuals during the first century was not expected; the Messiah also wasn't expected to be resurrected because he wasn't expected to die in the first place; (5) it is virtually impossible to account "for the early Christian belief in Jesus as Messiah without the resurrection" (50); (6) the various resurrection teachings in Christianity demand a historical explanation, and Jesus' physical resurrection is the only one that ultimately suffices.

Chapter 4 lays out "The Biblical Case for Ordaining Women." The essay contains little new content for this topic. Wright's overall position resonates with Philip Payne's *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, and more recently with Cindy Westfall's *Paul and Gender*. I was not aware, however, of one interesting detail in the Mary/Martha pericope in Luke 10: "Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet *in the male part of the house* rather than being kept in the back rooms with the other women. . . . *Jesus declares that she is right to do so*" (70; italics original).

Chapter 5 ("Jesus Is Coming—Plant a Tree!") extends some of the theological implications taken up earlier regarding the resurrection (i.e., ecological care), much as Chapter 8 ("Idolatry 2.0") does with spiritual formation, delivering a penetrating critique of the real and powerful Western gods of today's world (consumerism, sex, status, etc.). Chapter 6 is more distinct in its topical treatment of evil. Wright's goal seems to be putting up guardrails for the church's struggle in handling this issue. The first of these is that "there are no easy answers" (114). Second, "the line between good and evil" is not a simple "us" and "them," but runs through every person and institution. Third, there is, in fact, a difference between evils involving people and those that do not (e.g., natural disasters). In the end, Jesus' own confrontation with evil on earth serves as a template for how Christians might frame the discussion. Demons, storms, disease, betrayal, lies, administrative

power plays, terror—Jesus faced it all. “What the Gospels offer is not a philosophical explanation of evil—what it is or why it’s there—but the story of an *event* in which the living God *deals with it* . . . in which . . . we may perhaps glimpse God’s presence in the deepest darkness of our world” (122; italics original).

The chapter (7) on “How the Bible Reads the Modern World” addresses the “Enlightenment” worldview shift and what, in retrospect, the Bible really has to offer today. In “Our Politics Are Too Small” (chapter 8) and “How to Engage Tomorrow’s World” (9), Wright attempts to dislodge some of the common gridlocks in political opinion, critiquing needless military violence as well as people’s faith in the “right” leadership, and highlighting the inevitable political implications of the NT story and God’s “public Kingdom project” (174). “We need to let Paul remind us,” he says, “precisely when major cultural change is upon us, that our confidence is not in the solidity of Western culture or the basic goodness of modern democracy” (185). And whether we like it or not, functions of both the press and the state have gone too far; reclaiming a biblical vision of the church’s purpose is difficult but necessary: “We would be claiming back ground that we’ve not only lost but in most cases have forgotten we ever possessed” (195).

Chapter 9 iterates the irreplaceable prophetic and revelatory purpose of art, beauty, and music. Finally, chapter 10 (“Becoming a People of Hope”) provides signposts to what following Christ might look like on an internal, personal level. “As with Mary and her tears, as with Thomas and his skepticism, Jesus comes halfway with Peter” (217). The people who have seen Jesus die and rise to life were as broken and confused as anyone today—and yet that is precisely where Jesus is willing to come and work. It is in this world and encounter that Christians today find genuine hope—in becoming such people of hope.

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*Strong and Weak: Embracing a Life of Love, Risk and True Flourishing.* Andy Crouch. Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2016. ISBN: 978083084432. Pp. 192. \$20.00 (USD).

*Christianity Today*’s executive editor has produced a follow-up to his earlier *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* and *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power* (IVP, 2009 and 2013 respectively). This book is considerably shorter and smaller than its cousins, deceptively lightweight in style and profile, but it proves to be a good and necessary extrapolation of Crouch’s argument in *Playing God*. Where that book explored in greater theological depth the interrelated themes of power, idolatry, and divine image-bearing, this one asks us, more simply, to con-

sider how we as Christians might reflect God's image by helping others to flourish. Flourishing, for Crouch, means "not just to survive, but to thrive; not just to exist, but to explore and expand. . . . To be fully alive would connect us not just to our own proper human purpose but to the very heights and depths of divine glory," becoming "both strong and weak," embracing "both capacity and frailty" (10–11, building from definitions established in *Playing God*, 35, e.g.).

The mainstay of the book is what Crouch happily admits is "one of my favorite things: a 2x2 chart," a simple graphic that "helps us grasp the nature of paradox" and the complementary ideas contained therein (12). Crouch's most favoured chart features four quadrants—Flourishing, Suffering, Withdrawing and Exploiting—demarcated by an x-axis of Vulnerability and a y-axis of Authority: thus his titular "true flourishing" is found in the top-right quadrant, where vulnerability and authority increase together. Helpfully, the chart also functions as an atlas for the book. Thus we journey first through each of the four quadrants, after which our tour guide reminds us that "we must be willing to bear the burden of *visible* authority with *hidden* vulnerability. . . [without which] we will never truly be able to serve the flourishing of others" (114; italics original). But, he adds, "we must also choose the way of Suffering . . . the ultimate experience of risk without the possibility of meaningful action, the land of the dead. Only if we visit these two quadrants, in the right time and in the right way, will we bear the image of the most transformative human being the world has ever known" (115).

The journey through the four quadrants is for the most part engaging, convincing, and convicting. Beginning with Quadrant I, Flourishing, Crouch reminds us that even the most vulnerable can flourish if they have (or are given) a measure of authority, "*the capacity for meaningful action*" (35; italics original). But to contribute toward others' flourishing requires a form of vulnerability "so committed . . . that everything meaningful is at risk" (48). In Quadrant II, Suffering, Crouch includes close-to-home encounters with injustice and tragically early deaths, as well as more distant forms, such as social media firms' outsourcing of anti-pornography measures: "the depredations of a few, the pornographers and exploiters who seek power without vulnerability (Exploiting), are foisted on those with no alternative (Suffering) in order to allow the privileged to live in ignorant comfort (Withdrawing). It's a world in which poverty of spirit is bought at near-poverty wages" (65). In these varied contexts of suffering, many "needs may remain unmet in any material sense," but Crouch argues that "the gospel restores hope and dignity, meaningful action and meaningful risk" (68).

Quadrant III, Withdrawing, confronts us with temptations hidden in the affluence (or relative affluence) of North American culture. "The greatest challenge of success," Crouch writes, "is the freedom it gives you to opt out of real risk and real authority" by substituting *simulated* authority and vulnerability (77). Here, I think



he could have said more, concerning what Withdrawing looks like in interpersonal and/or church contexts. Aside from the example of a university student who “confided that in each of his four closest friendships, he was experiencing overwhelming temptation to minimize risk, avoid real engagement and abandon them” (89), we hear a little too little about what Withdrawing from relationships really looks or feels like—though we may be able to fill in the gaps with our own experiences. Quadrant IV, Exploiting, considers temptations toward control and conquest, authority without vulnerability, as in readily apparent examples of militarized policing in the United States. After an interlude where we are asked how to “move from the story of Exploiting and Suffering to the story of Safety and Flourishing” (111), Crouch offers his answer, a more detailed exploration of his “hidden” vulnerability (a matter of public perception versus confidential reality), followed by the promised descent to “the land of the dead, the realm of those who have lost all capacity for action” (144–45). This is a reclamation of the Apostles’ Creed’s *descendit ad inferos*, a vulnerable self-emptying so that others might flourish. The interaction with the Creed and its biblical referent, 1 Peter 3:19, is rather light (perhaps wisely so, given the intended lay audience), but with Crouch as Virgil to our Dante, the subsequent examples of Christ-like leadership are telling enough.

Two minor complaints: first, the book’s frequent sidebars are usually a welcome repetition for emphasis of a point from their respective pages, but occasionally—as in one instance when Crouch has already repeated the same point on the page, so that it ends up appearing *three* times (112)—they feel more like Twitter-friendly quotables than truly defining points. Second, I would like to have seen more of Crouch’s representative Christology, hinted at in remarks about “leaders who balance the *community’s* vulnerability with their own *representative* authority” and the call “to become like him [Jesus]” in growing vulnerability (127, 171; italics original). As the latter comment concludes Crouch’s deepest dialogue with Scripture here, in 1–2 Corinthians (whose original recipients were influenced by the authoritarian appeal of the Greco-Roman patronage networks, not just the “leaders who claimed spiritual power and backed it up with impressive personal appearances” that Crouch acknowledges, 168), some further development of Christ as our saving representative—or of how it is that we re-present him, as witnesses to the authorities around and above us—might have strengthened Crouch’s work.

Finally, as Crouch himself often models vulnerability here—e.g., by noting the personal failures that go understandably unmentioned when he is introduced as an accomplished speaker—I hope readers will welcome more vulnerability on my part than a book review format usually allows. So far as my two recently adopted preschoolers are aware, their only involvement with this book is that they observed, as I was reading it, the cover illustration of an elephant carrying a bird on



his back: the book, I explained, was about the strong elephant helping his friend the bird by giving him a ride, so that the latter could rest his wings. But of course my boys were on my mind for much of my reading time, and not just because Crouch begins to discuss 2x2 charts by illustrating the problems of linear, zero-sum thinking with examples of approaches to parenting (i.e., warmth versus firmness, 14–16) and returns to parenting for later illustrations as well. Rather, his appeal to bear burdens of visible authority and hidden vulnerability tugs at my soul while my wife and I coax our sons to eat, sleep, and settle into our family. I assume that questions of how to nurture and protect (without overprotecting) one's children are (or should be) universal among parents; but I am finding such questions particularly urgent, even unsettling, as an *adoptive* parent. Nurtured though they were by their foster parents, these boys bring vulnerabilities with them that show up in unpredictable, half-hidden, peekaboo ways every day; so every day presents a new challenge—a joyful challenge, yes, but a messy one—in how to toddle in step with their small and sometimes stumbling feet, blending authority and vulnerability in such a way that they can flourish. In this, *Strong and Weak* is a source of help, in ways that will remain true long after our boys have forgotten about the elephant's attempt to help his smaller companion.

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*Introducing World Religions: A Christian Engagement.* Charles E. Farhadian. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. ISBN: 9780801032349. Pp. xxi + 600. \$49.99 (USD).

Despite assumptions held by many in the West of the inevitability of secularization, religion shows no signs whatsoever of vanishing. In fact, recent statistics published by the Pew Research Center reveal that more than eight-in-ten people worldwide identify with a religion. Further, the major religions of the world are actually growing. The need for Christians to acquire at least a basic grasp of the global religious landscape is more important than ever, especially as patterns of immigration increase North America's religious diversity, and as rates of conversion and population growth are redistributing religious influence from the northern to the southern hemisphere. In recent years there have been several excellent resources published to introduce other religions (and how to study them) to Christian students and non-specialists. Interestingly, publishers in the evangelical tradition are responsible for some of the best specimens of this "world religions in Christian perspective" genre: e.g., Terry Muck and Francis Adeney, *Christianity Encountering World Religions* (Baker Academic, 2007); Irving Hexham, *Understanding*

*World Religions* (Zondervan, 2011); and the recent *Handbook of Religion*, also from Baker Academic.<sup>1</sup> Charles Farhadian's new book is a noteworthy addition to this field, introducing the world's eighth largest religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism/Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—while a concluding chapter treats several new religious movements that have grown from the soil of world religions. Farhadian prefaces his study with a chapter on "The Persistence of Religion" that sets out the case for why Christians should study other religions, offering a succinct account of the origins of the discipline of religious studies through figures like Friedrich Max-Müller and James Frazer, and some of the more influential theories of religion (e.g., Freud, Durkheim, Marx, Geertz, Eliade).

Farhadian, who teaches world religions and Christian mission at Westmont College in California, has an affinity for the classic European *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, which sought to study a religion within a matrix of geography, culture and human psychology. Yet a debt is obvious as well to the comparative approach modeled by Eliade and others who discerned common structures or patterns among religions, even as it resisted reducing the phenomenon of religion to a mere by-product of historical or cultural processes. In approximately fifty-page segments Farhadian sketches each world religion's historical origins and development, defining beliefs and practices, cultural and social legacy, and interaction with other religions. Sidebars provide citations from sacred texts and writers to let students hear each religion's distinctive voice, while additional inserts into the narrative guide students toward points of similarity and dissimilarity between religions. A strength of *Introducing World Religions* is its acknowledgment of the discrepancy between how religions formally define themselves through text, symbol, and tradition and how they are actually practiced—religion is "messy," Farhadian notes on several occasions. As such, the discipline of religious studies has to account for a religion's popular manifestations rather than just its official representations. Further, Farhadian rightly argues that one of the biggest challenges in studying world religions (as opposed to indigenous religions) is to account for the tension between the universal and particular, i.e., that universal texts and traditions do not exist in pristine form, but are always appropriated by particular cultures and ethnicities, urban or rural, with localized social concerns or intellectual dilemmas that shape their understanding of such texts and traditions. Appropriately, then, Farhadian recommends a multi-disciplinary approach to the "messiness" of religion, including social sciences as well as philosophy, history, and philology.

1 Terry Muck, Harold Netland, Gerald McDermott, eds., *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), reviewed by this reviewer in CTR 3.2.

*Introducing World Religions* is enhanced by many images of sacred buildings and figures such as the Taj Mahal and Gandhi, as well as the myriad ways in which religion is embodied in everyday life, like a family meal, a sacred landscape, or a style of clothing. Such images are not merely cosmetic but essential to Farhadian's aim of pressing students to a greater recognition of religion's ubiquity. Western students who bracket religion as something private and personal will be challenged to reconsider their presumptions about religion's place in global societies by such images. Similarly, a haunting picture of a young girl executed by the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia allows Farhadian the opportunity to gently encourage readers from devoutly Christian backgrounds to think beyond the simplistic "right or wrong" paradigm of religion, reflecting instead on how people around the world use religion to survive.

Countless individuals, communities, and nations have endured unthinkable tragedies, forcing them to consider the role of religion in maintaining one's identity, and to find the sources within one's religion to make sense of tragedy or deprivation. Likewise, how do religions provide the source for happiness, contentment, and joy even in the midst of disappointments? Religions involve our human behaviors and emotions, so let us not forget the pervasive psychological context related to religions (13–14).

The book's subtitle is significant: *A Christian Engagement*. Farhadian writes from a perspective that is winsomely, yet unapologetically, Christian, and has written this textbook for a broadly Christian readership. But what does he mean by a *Christian* engagement with world religions? First, that it is neither desirable nor possible for Christians to suppress their faith commitments for a supposedly objective study of religion. Indeed, an as-fair-as-possible understanding of other religions can be best achieved by recognizing (against many modern theories of religion) the essentially religious nature of humankind as taught by the Christian tradition, and cultivating Christian virtues of patience, humility, and kindness as we grant room to persons of other religions to explain their faith. Farhadian makes a convincing case for a Christian hospitality in studying religion, drawing on years of experience with students who initially try to "pigeonhole" other religions, usually from a western intellectual grid that is not always compatible with non-western religions. Second, Farhadian believes that studying other religions or participating in inter-religious dialogue can enable Christians to recover aspects of our own tradition that have been forgotten and neglected. In an age of digital noise, can Buddhism remind Christians of our own tradition's attention to mindfulness and meditation? Can the Aryan imposition of the Vedic tradition on conquered peoples of the Indus Valley (c. 1500 BCE), which is a constitutive element of Hinduism,

inform discussions of Christianity's historic relationship with political power? In outlining the holistic worldview of Taoism, where art, literature, architecture, medicine, and even corporeity are integrated, Farhadian wonders in a sidebar if any Christian civilization has achieved the same. Jainism's attentiveness to the sacredness of all life permits opportunity for Christians to clarify our understanding of God's creation as sacred yet not divine; conflicts in Islam and Sikhism over orthodoxy, heterodoxy, and canonization prompt obvious comparisons with the Christian tradition. Third, Farhadian is convinced that while Jesus Christ is the Truth, truth can be found in other religions, so the study of other religions can both expand and challenge Christians' theological and spiritual commitments. Apart from sketching the views of Barth, Rahner, and Hick on divine truth in non-Christian religions as representative opinions on this contested matter, the author does not offer a theological justification for his own perspective, which is regrettable, given that many students will be curious precisely at this point.

Throughout, Farhadian insists that Christianity *is* a religion—which may be controversial with some readers. He takes issue with both the popular adage that Christianity is “a relationship, not a religion” and Barth's broadside against religion as the antithesis of the gift of divine revelation. This first view—often encountered among evangelical students—not only neglects the fact that a personal relationship with Jesus is still “religious” (in the sense that the relationship is embedded in broader social, cultural, intellectual, and psychological currents); it presumes that adherents of other religions cannot enjoy the same fervor and affection for the divine that Christians do. As to the second view, while Farhadian appreciates Barth's theological intentions, “the fact remains that Christianity exhibits general characteristics similar to those of other religious traditions. And why cannot Christianity be both *religion* and *revelation*?” (26; italics original).

Toward the end, Farhadian suggests that the church's dilemma is no longer Tertullian's “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?”, but “What has New York to do with Mecca?” or “What has Jerusalem to do with Varanasi?” For helping Christian students and non-specialists to think through such questions, it is difficult to conceive of a better textbook. Farhadian has not only mastered the primary material and secondary scholarship on world religions, he is a gifted and committed teacher who writes with clarity, simplicity, and a sensitivity to many of the prejudices and concerns that Christian students may have as they approach the study of religion. Along with the images, maps, charts, and sidebars that encourage comparison and dialogue with other religions, *Introducing World Religions* offers additional features to professors who choose the book as a class text. An instructor's manual can be accessed via the publisher's website that includes a sample syllabus, discussion questions, mobile-friendly flash cards for students' use, and introductory videos to each chapter from the author. The text itself has been formatted for

easy importing or uploading. Such excellent features should help give *Introducing World Religions* the wide exposure and classroom use it deserves.

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*You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit.* James K. A. Smith.  
Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016. ISBN: 9781587433801. Pp. xii + 210. \$19.99 (USD).

*You Are What You Love* by James K. A. Smith focuses on the matter of Christian discipleship. There are many classic works on discipleship and/or spiritual formation; Thomas à Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ* and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship* come immediately to mind, but more recent authors have made their mark as well, including Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, Eugene Peterson, Henri Nouwen, and N. T. Wright. So what does Smith offer that is new in a field already saturated by such worthy works? Frankly, I did not find that he broke any new ground. Yet, I do not think he would view such an evaluation as reproach.

One of Smith's gifts is as a summarizer and popularizer of more difficult works. A good example is his recent book *How (Not) to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Eerdmans, 2014), an interpretive lens on the Canadian philosopher's massive *A Secular Age* (Harvard University Press, 2007), as well as a practical guide to Christian living within such an age. *You Are What You Love* is also indebted to Robert Webber, whose work, as Smith acknowledges, has "had a significant impact on me at a crucial phase of my life, and in many ways I'm simply writing in his wake. This little book is a dinghy bobbing along behind the ship of Webber's 'ancient-future' corpus" (193). For those who have read Webber, the idea that a lack of novelty might amount to praise for Smith will be understandable.

That said, Smith brings his own considerable skill as a professional philosopher and able cultural critic to the table here. *You Are What You Love* is in fact a condensed version of his more ambitious and scholarly project, the *Cultural Liturgies* trilogy on the theology of culture: *Desiring the Kingdom*, *Imagining the Kingdom* (both of which have received high praise), and a third volume which has yet to be published. It is also worth noting that Smith is an engaging writer who seems to have his finger on the pulse of millennials.

At its core the book is about worship, for "worship is the heart of discipleship" (25). And while worship is significantly what takes place on Sunday morning, it cannot be reduced to this; in fact, it's central to Smith's thesis that all of life is worship of one thing or another. I think these few lines from Wallace, as quoted by Smith, drive much of Smith's argument: "In the day-to-day trenches of adult

life, there is no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And an outstanding reason for choosing some sort of god or spiritual-type thing to worship—be it JC or Allah, be it Yahweh or the Wiccan mother-goddess or the Four Noble Truths or some infrangible set of ethical principles—is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive” (23).

Smith’s argument is largely in opposition—though sometimes in an unbalanced way—to views of discipleship that focus primarily on the mind. A key question he poses is this: “Do you ever experience a gap between what you *know* and what you *do*?” (5; italics original). He’s trying to tap into postmodern sentiments (he is, after all, first and foremost a philosopher of postmodern French thought) that express a tiredness with the Cartesian heritage and what he calls “thinking-thingism” (from Descartes’s *res cogitans*). This entails offering a fresh (actually, as Smith acknowledges, an old, Augustinian) theological anthropology that understands humans as lovers at their core, rather than knowers. Descartes thought of humans as “brains-on-a-stick,” whereas Augustine (and Jesus for that matter) was more interested in appealing to the human heart, “[b]ecause the heart is the existential chamber of our *love*, and it is our loves that orient us toward some ultimate end or *telos*” (9; italics original). Such a premise, however, has significant implications for discipleship: much of what shapes us for good or evil will be at the level of subconscious desire. In fact, in what is probably his most original chapter, entitled, “You Might Not Love What You Think: Learning to Read ‘Secular’ Liturgies,” Smith offers an exegesis of cultural liturgical sites (the shopping mall is his primary example) that shape our loves—often without us ever being aware of it. “The mall is a religious site, not because it is theological but because it is liturgical. Its spiritual significance (and threat) isn’t found in its ‘ideas’ or its ‘messages’ but in its rituals. The mall doesn’t care what you *think*, but it is very much interested in what you *love*. Victoria’s secret is that she’s actually after your heart” (41; italics original).

I think Smith would agree with Woody Allen (and, Google informs me, Selena Gomez) that “the heart wants what it wants,” but none of this means that our (fallen) nature and desires have the last word on our destiny. In fact, the good news is that there is something called virtue, which Smith, following Aristotle and Aquinas, calls “second nature.” In this sense, Smith argues, “character is destiny,” and “your character is the web of dispositions you’ve acquired (virtues and vices) that work as automaticities, disposing you to act in certain ways” (36). Here, then, is the missing link in the process of discipleship: if worship is at the heart of discipleship, and worship is a matter of orienting our loves to a particular end or *telos*, then the way we do so is through character-forming habits. In the same way that one learns to play the piano, or shoot a basketball, or drive a car—by con-

scious practice that matures into unconscious response—so the spiritual life is largely a matter of acquiring spiritual habits that mature into virtuous living. These habits shape our hearts and orient our loves toward God’s kingdom. Alas, it is here that Smith fails to give sufficient credit to the mind: the move from fallen nature to second nature, i.e., virtue, requires the work of the mind in directing the will toward a particular *telos*. (This is why Smith writes books—to convince the minds of his readers that the kingdom of God is a worthy end, and that spiritual habits are the best possible means to that end.) He does not deny this, and even briefly notes the ongoing value of thinking (6), but his approach could be balanced more explicitly.

The rest of the book (chapters 3–7) is a guide to how this might look on Sunday morning, at home, and at work. Many, if not all, of his suggestions harken back to ancient (and well-known) Christian practices: corporate confession (he has a deep appreciation for the Book of Common Prayer), prayer and song, preaching and offering, baptism and Communion. These chapters are a rich resource and have great practical import for pastors, teachers, and parents. But why, we might wonder, should we learn from ancient Christians rather than developing our own practices? The answer he offers, beyond the obvious fact that these practices are “shaped by the biblical story” (78), is that “[b]ecause the rituals and liturgies of their [ancient] surrounding culture were much more overt—for example, their civic political spaces were unabashedly temples, whereas ours traffic under euphemisms (stadiums, capitols, universities)—early Christians were more intentional about and conscious of the practices they adopted for worship” (79). It is in this sense, then, that Smith can claim his “argument is the very opposite of novel; it’s ancient: the church’s worship is the heart of discipleship” (68). Especially counter-cultural is his suggestion that these practices should be repetitive. Rather than a sign of inauthenticity (a great sin in an expressivist age), he thinks repetition in worship and prayer is vital for growth in the same way that scales are for the pianist, or batting practice for the baseball player: repetition builds neural and muscular pathways that make performance look easy.

Since vol. 3 of Smith’s *Cultural Liturgies* trilogy, entitled *Awaiting the King: Reforming Public Theology*, is to be published in Spring 2017, *You Are What You Love* might well serve as an entryway into this series, and into conversation about the implications of Smith’s larger project for discipleship, worship, education, and cultural-political engagement. If nothing else, *You Are What You Love* will encourage its readers to take a liturgical audit of their lives, and in so doing to strategically implement character-forming habits that might reorient their loves toward the kingdom of God.

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